2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

PREFACE

● 114
122

The Yakut were under the observation of the author for a long time, but, in the main, the data presented in this paper were obtained during two periods of field study. Thus, the most intensive study was made among the groups living on the Kolyma River during the years 1884 to 1894, as a member of an expedition of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society of St. Petersburg fitted out at the expense of I. M. Sibiriakov. During this time the author traveled from the mouth of the Kolyma to its sources and back, visiting en route all the Yakut settlements discovered. At present most of the Yakut live much farther south, chiefly in the region of the southern Lena and its tributaries. This southernmost group of Yakut was visited in the years 1900 to 1902 when the author was a member of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, organized by the American Museum of Natural History for the intensive study of eastern Siberian and northwestern American anthropological problems. It was while engaged in the latter field study that an ethnological collection, which is now in the Museum, was made. The illustrations in this paper are for the most part from objects in that collection.

WALDEMAR JOCHELSON.

Nice, France
January 13, 1933.

HABITAT

Yakut settlements occupy almost the whole of northeastern Siberia. 131
Their territory extends eastward from the Lena to the Kolyma River for about 2000 miles and from the Arctic Sea to its southern limits about 1056 miles. Other tribes are settled or roam within these boundaries and Yakut villages are encountered beyond the area indicated, as will be seen below (Fig. 107). According to Strelbitsky[1] Yakutsk Province occupies an area of 1,533,255 square miles (3,489,689 square versts).

Physical Geography of Yakutsk Province

Yakutsk Province was formerly divided into five districts: Olek- 631
minsk, Yakutsk, Viliuisk, Verkhoyansk, and Kolymsk. Two new districts have recently been established by the Soviet Government: the mountainous country on the upper course of the Aldan River, a tributary of the Lena, rich in gold, was designated as a separate district named Aldan, and a part of the Verkhoyansk District, the valley of the lower Lena River, rich in fish and peltry, was named Bulun. But, to avoid confusion in describing the physical features of different localities, I shall employ the former nomenclature.

Both northern districts, Verkhoyansk and Kolymsk, which I 114
traversed in different directions will be reviewed. The route between Yakutsk and Sredne Kolymsk, through Verkhoyansk and over the Verkhoyansk Ridge, was covered four times, twice (1895, 1897) from west to east and twice (1888, 1902) in the opposite direction. The eastward and westward journeys were made in winter on dog and reindeer sledges. One trip from east to west was accomplished during the summer on horseback. During the winter of 1897 I traveled over the tundra on reindeer sledges from the Kolyma River to Bulun on the Lena River. At some points I touched the seacoast, as at the mouth of the Khroma River. I also made some side tripe, visiting the Yakut settlements on Lake Senkel and the Soldatovo River; I went from the Yakut settlement, Alayikha, on the Indighirka River, to the Russian settlement, Russkoye Ustye, at the mouth of the same river; from Bulun to the islands at the mouth of the Lena River; from Nishne Kolymsk to the mountainous region of the Big and Small Anui rivers, tributaries of the Kolyma; from Verkhne Kolymsk to the Yassachnaya, Nelemnaya, and Korkodon rivers. I visited the last three rivers three times (1896, 1897) going twice from Verkhoyansk and once (1902) from the shores of the

[1]Strelbitsky, I. A., *The Calculation of the Surface of the Russian Empire*, 1874. In Russian.

1[Cf. statement on p. 74, category 116, which indicates that Bulun was formerly part of the Viliuisk district--ANALYST]

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

114 Okhotsk Sea over the Stanovoi Ridge. I ascended the Omolon River about 150 miles from its mouth in 1897 and crossed it in its upper course in 1902 en route from the Okhotsk Sea.

Although my chief objectives were anthropological, I endeavored to obtain geographical and topographical data, particularly in regions not previously visited. With this end in view I always carried the necessary instruments, compasses, sling thermometers, aneroid barometers, boiling point thermometers, and others, and kept systematic diaries.

The Permanent Frozen Soil

134 The territory of the Yakut lies within the province in which is distributed the so-called "permanent frozen soil," "fossil ice," "ground ice" or better, "underground ice." This factor which influences the climate and consequently the population of the country merits some consideration. The vast area occupied by the underground ice in northern Asia equals about 7,000,000 square versts, or 3,076,000 square miles, or only a little less than the area of Europe. Another peculiarity of the wide distribution of the underground ice in Asia is its extension far to the south. The existence of underground ice in polar regions, where relatively little heat is radiated from the sun is understandable, but when we observe that in some places this underground ice is found as far south as the latitudes of Kief, Paris, or Vienna, the question becomes complicated.

There are several theories of the origin of underground ice. First, the frost cracks the surface, the snowdrifts and the frozen soil are compressed by the cold and cracked; the melted snow penetrates these crevasses, during the spring and summer expanding them vertically as well as horizontally, depending, however, on the composition of the ground. There, because of the low temperature of the soil, it freezes, forming ice veins, or beds. Especially when they are shallow, the underground ice beds increase the humidity of the surface soil and lead to the formation of morasses and the development of swamp vegetation, particularly turf-mosses. Such soil, even omitting from consideration its geographic position and climatic condition, produces only a few species of vegetation and the arboreal flora is usually reduced to two varieties: the Siberian larch (*Larix sibirica*), and the birch (*Betula alba* or *Betula nana*). Even these appear only as rugged trunks or crooked stunted bushes, the roots of which spread on the surface and do not penetrate deeply into the soil.

No one has investigated the influence of the frozen soil on the fauna. But, as far as we know, many animals adjust themselves to these condi-

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

spirits. Even representations of the horse, which is regarded as a benevolent being and almost worshiped, are avoided. Only the shaman's dress may be decorated with figures of men and animals which represent his guardians and benevolent and evil spirits (pp. 107–118).

Fig. 82 (70-9367). An Ivory Carving depicting a Man on Snowshoes.

Fig. 83 (70-8799, 8916). Wood Carvings representing a Lamp on a Stand and a Saddled Horse.

Professor Boas has called attention to the difference between the realistic decoration of ceremonial objects and the geometrical designs on those in common use among the Indians and Eskimo.[1] This differentiation is applicable to Yakut art.

[1] Boas, Franz, The Decorative Art of the North American Indian (*Popular Science Monthly*, vol. 62, pp. 481–498, 1903).

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

THE KUMISS FESTIVALS[1]

During my leadership of the Siberian Division of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, I was engaged in the investigation of the Koryak and Yukaghir. The results of this investigation were published in two comprehensive volumes. I went to the Yukaghir from the Koryak country across the Stanovoi Mountain Ridge, and my return route to Europe and America lay through the territory of the Yakut and the whole of Siberia. 114

The years 1888–97 were spent among the Yakut as a political exile. During the two last years of that period I was a member of the Yakut Expedition of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. Professor Boas, the organizer of the Jesup Expedition, wished to take advantage of my knowledge of the Yakut country and tribe and to acquire Yakut ethnological collections for the Museum. An extensive collection was gathered. Most European museums, even those of Russia, have at present only insignificant collections from this interesting tribe, the ancient culture of which is disappearing under the influence of climate, Russian contact, and other factors.

The large ornamented wooden kumiss goblets described below are not easily obtained at present. The conical birchbark summer dwelling is no longer used. However, the Yakut, though now living in the extreme northeast of Siberia, are typical representatives of the culture of the nomadic or semi-nomadic horse and cattle-breeding Turkic tribes of Central Asia. They have preserved one of the oldest Turkic dialects. They introduced silver, iron, and copper work, fashion in costume ornamentation, dualistic religious ideas, and the poetical folklore of the Tataric peoples of Western Asia. In their old habitat they were principally horse-breeders, but in their present abode they increased the number of their horned cattle to the detriment of their herds of horses and cow's milk became a substitute for mare's milk, from which kumiss is made. Finally, the cultivation of cereal plants, a trait borrowed from the Russians, in the southern and middle parts of Yakutsk Province, has so progressed in the last thirty years, that agriculture is now the chief occupation and bread the staple food of many Yakut of Yakutsk District, particularly of Olekminsk. Nowadays droves of horses and mares for milking, are found only in localities far removed from the centers of Russian influence, and these belong to a few very rich families. 178 796

[1] Jochelson, Koryak, and Yukaghir, and especially, Kumiss Festivals of the Yakut and the Decoration of Kumiss Vessels (*Boas Anniversary Volume*, pp. 257–271, New York, 1906) where an account of these ceremonies and their paraphernalia was first published.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

With the passing of the production of kumiss, the ancient ornamented kumiss vessels and goblets, as well as the customs, festivals, and ceremonials associated with its production and use are also disappearing.

I was fortunate enough not only to collect a great number of ancient kumiss vessels in various remote localities, but also to arrange a kumiss festival not far from Yakutsk. However, before proceeding with the description of the festival I witnessed, it may be of interest to present one version of its origin.[1]

Long ago, Onogoi-bai, a Tatar of the Sakha tribe, settled on the Lena River. He came thither with his wife, Sara, his brother, Ulūkhozo, and his men servants, thirteen men altogether. He possessed numerous cattle and horses and nomadized on the left bank of the Lena, on a plain he called Saisary. While living on Saisary Lake, a son, Ān-Taibȳr, and two daughters, Ān-Tshyngai and Nyukā-Kharakhsyn were born to them. Later, a strong and alert youth named Elliei came to him. He was an excellent hunter; roamed through the mountain forests like a wolf, lead bears in by his hand, and dashed through the water like a pike. He entered the service of Onogoi, lived with him three years, and gained the love and respect of all the family.

Once Sara said to her husband: "Er-Elliei is such a clever man, he may be better qualified to become our son-in-law than to remain a worker." Onogoi answered indignantly, "I shall not give my daughter to a stranger. Apparently you like him yourself." Sara replied, "I know you fear Elliei and that he is happier than you are. You tremble when you see him. If you want to convince yourself that what I say is true, stretch a white horsehide through the middle of our birchbark tent, fasten it to the ground with pegs, sit down on it, and with a goblet filled to the brim with kumiss in your hand, call for Elliei." Onogoi did as his wife advised him. When Elliei entered, Onogoi's hand trembled so that he spilled half the contents of the goblet.

When Onogoi convinced himself of Elliei's power, he said to him, "Friend, you have served me faithfully as a relative for more than three years, now I wish to compensate you. My good horse and valuable furs are not sufficient reward for you. You have no woman friend; choose that one of my daughters who pleases you." Elliei thanked him for his kindness and asked for time to consider the matter. Ān-Tchȳngai, Onogoi's elder daughter was rather ugly, while the younger, Nyuka-Kharakhsyn, was handsome and the father's darling.

[1]Recorded by Priklonsky and translated into German by Radloff, *ibid.*, 74–77, and re-translated into English by the author.

"During six centuries the Yakuts were successively conquered by other races, and their extraordinary vitality alone saved them from extinction. Moreover, the Yakuts are the only settlers in the North who increase in numbers. But their condition of chronic subjection did not reflect advantageously upon their moral qualities, which are very bad. Reclus, who so well describes the polar races, gives the Yakuts the very worst of characters, but this eminent geographer was only partly right. The description applies only to the Yakuts of the Olekminsk region, who are in constant association with the Russians. Reclus' opinion was also held by [45] Vrousevitch, who wrote a most interesting article, 'The Civilisation and Life of the Inhabitants of the Yakutsk Region.' Judge for yourself of the psychological condition of a people treated as shown by the following sayings:

'You can make a friend of a Yakut only by flogging him.'

'Yakuts respect most those who treat them worst'.

These specimens of brutal philosophy are related by the American citizen, Gilder, as being the utterance of Ispravnik Varrava. Gilder further relates that once this man, being anxious to travel more quickly to a station 250 versts distant wished to take some deer which did not belong to him. The Yakuts naturally were unwilling to give them, since their owners would lose eight days' work just for the sake of obliging the ispravnik.

'A loud and lively conversation ensued,' writes Gilder, 'of which to my regret I could

not understand a word, but when I saw the ispravnik suddenly strike a Yakut with his fist and our Cossack at the same time lasso another who was trying to run away, I thought it my duty to ask the ispravnik whether I should begin to beat someone and, if so, on whom should I begin? He answered me that everything was all right and that the people were now obedient and "well disposed."' Unfortunately this was the only method employed to make the people 'well disposed'. Official visits are long remembered by the Yakuts! Here is a little sketch from the diary of a Bishop of Yakutsk: 'The Yakut drivers waited for their master [46] for fourteen days, and where? In the forest, under the open sky, in November with 46° R. of frost! They dug a hole in the snow, in which they placed logs, and made a fire to warm themselves.'"

7: Shklovsky -- 198-199 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 114, 273, 796

"I venture to quote from the bibliographical rarity 'Reisen' (page 172, vol. ii.), by Gmelin, of whose impartiality and honesty all polar explorers hold so high an opinion!

'All the holidays are devoted more to the devil than to God. Drunkenness and licentious behaviour give a very bad example to the numerous heathen, who see the greatest pleasure of the inhabitants that consists in drunkenness; and not the drunkenness confined to one occasion, one evening, for example, for the drunkenness that infects all the people at these times is such that no astrologer could find even one happy hour when they are sober, for to them all hours are the same. On Christmas Day a kind of infection seizes the people, like a fever, from which on the second or third day all become quite mad. The illness culminates on the fourteenth day in a general madness, which does not end for five or six weeks. During the week before Lent they are seized with a fresh paroxysm, from which they recover in eight days. In spring, at Easter time, this madness returns, with the difference that, owing to Lent, the attack is shorter but fiercer and ends on the seventh day. Like convalescents who are just recovering from a serious illness, the people only very gradually resume their normal life--that is to say, they are drunk for only four days in the week. Sometimes the madness returns with double strength, and then they are drunk for eight days at a time. I consider that drunkenness is a disease which, like epilepsy, ends only with death.' [199]

Such a statement of the habits of the Yakuts is given by Gmelin."

11: Lansdell--305 M-3 (1879) 1882 Yakut
116, 114, 177, 756, 797

"Strahlenberg calls these people Pagans, but the latest writers call them Christians; and the method of their conversion was, it is said, extraordinary, for the Russian priests not making much headway against their superstitions, an ukase was one day issued setting forth that the good and loyal nation of the Yakutes were thought worthy to enter, and were consequently admitted into, the Russian Church, to become a part of the Tsar's Christian family, and entitled to all the privileges of the rest of his children. Such was the tenor of this strange proclamation, and success attended the measure. The new Christians showed perfect sincerity in the adoption of their novel faith, and the Russian priests have established their sway over the Yakute race, though amongst the outlying portion a lingering belief in Shamanism still survives, of which travellers from Yakutsk to Okhotsk have been made aware by their Yakute guides leaving them awhile in foggy weather, and stealing off into the forest to perform certain mysterious rites."

14: Krauss--169 [2] E-5 (no date) 1888 Yakut
116, 158, 114

I have practically found one reference only in our scientific literature on the merjak disease (known also as olgandza), i. e. on chorea imitatoria, in the Archiv für gerichtliche Medizin, 1868, no. 2, where Dr. Kašin, who has studied the disease in the Yakut territory, has published an article. According to this author, the disease consists in irritability, and, partly, in convulsive movements and actions, which are committed by the patients without consciousness, by imitating the actions and movements of other people.

At the present time, relationship within the limits of the iye-usa is traced through the male line, and M. Sieroszewski makes the extremely likely guess that the division of the paternal clan into several maternal clans is a natural consequence of the polygamy that was once practiced among the Yakuts. Monogamous marriage took a firm hold among the Yakuts only at the beginning of the 19th century. (2) The aga-ūsa included all the

2. V. Jochelson, see Zhivaia Starina, 1895, II, 137.

descendants taking their descent from one father, while each īye-ūsa included only the issue of one of his wives. The supposition of M. Sieroszewski has a great deal of verisimilitude. [39] In reality, however, where polygamy leads to the above-mentioned division of the paternal clan into several maternal clans, it only plays the role of a factor supporting in life the reckoning of relationship through the female line, and not the reason which gave rise to it: only upon the basis of an already existing custom of reckoning relationship through the wife's line can the maternal clan arise, either as an independent organization, or as a sub-grouping of the paternal clan. Consequently, how ever the īye-ūsa may have arisen among the Yakuts, its existence must be in fact regarded as a proof that there once existed among the Yakuts the custom of determining relationship through the wife's line, the recollection of an epoch when the bonds uniting

child and father were not yet taken into account. The fact cited by M. Sieroszewski, that according to tradition many paternal clans (aga-ūsa) and even entire naslegi, took their designation from women, strengthens this supposition. The chief significance in the contemporary structure of the Yakuts, however, attaches to the aga-ūsa, the paternal clan.

38: Dobell--38-39 G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 114, 431, 556, 651, 661

"The chiefs and head men are very fond of making presents to the Chief and other officers of Government, because it is for them a very profitable business. When a present is made, a collection takes place from all the Yakuts of the Ouloos; and I have been assured the Prince generally collects at least twice the [39] amount of the present, taking care to put the surplus in his own pocket. This, and low wages together, have reduced the poorer class of Yakuts to a state of slavery; for, as they cannot pay their debts, they are obliged to serve those hard masters on their own terms. The tribes of Yakuts being now nearly all Christians and civilised, they ought to be put on the same footing with Russians, which would tend in a great measure to do away with a number of the abuses actually existing. Above all, measures should be adopted to abolish venality and peculation: that course seems necessary as well for the preservation as the prosperity of Siberia. The privileged classes should not be suffered to trade without taking out a license, which is actually the case, and whereby the merchant is injured, who pays the crown, and has to strive against an unfair competition."

38: Dobell--44 G-2 (1812-13) 1830
116, 114, 177

"The Siberian hordes, who are now intermixed with the
of them christened, do certainly no longer deserve the ap
to 'strangers;' but ought, on the contrary, to be placed o
Russian population."

Russians, and the majority
ellation, by a word equivalent
the same footing with the

/Pages i-iv are title pages./

/v/

Foreword

0-00 Frequently in the course of the decades just passed the attention of the entire educated world has been directed toward the far north of our globe; in particular the journeys of Nordenskiöld and his companions, crowned by the most magnificent success, and the northeast passage, finally gained by him after centuries of fruitless attempts, have continually turned the eyes of the scholars, as well as those of the laity, to the barren northern shores of the Asiatic continent.

The area of the mouth of the Lena in particular has incessantly preoccupied the European and even more the American press in recent months, since in December, 1881, the first report concerning the shipwrecked landing of the long-lost polar navigator "Jeannette" was transmitted by the Siberian telegraph, and soon afterwards various American expeditions were sent to search for the lost crew and Captain de Long along the lower Lena. Moreover this region has aroused further interest in that in the fall of 1882 one of the polar stations set up by international agreement in accordance with Weyprecht's proposal will start its activity here. This expedition, equipped by the Russian government (the second Russian polar station is on Nowaja-Semljá /Novaya Zemlya/), at whose head stand the gentlemen Captain Jürgens, Dr. Bunge, and Eigner, has already been in /vi/ Irkutsk for some time, from where it is likewise to depart for its destination by going up the Lena.

8 114 121 Under such circumstances I consider it to be a good time to publish herewith what I myself have experienced and found in these regions. A large part of the present work was done on the journey itself and only slightly changed later, in order not to lose the freshness of direct impressions.

While the arctic lands readily accessible by ship, such as Spitsbergen and the coasts of Greenland, have often been described and therefore are relatively well known to the public, only a little information about the interior arctic lands of Asia has reached wider circles. The distinguished works by Baron Wrangel and v. Middendorff -- the latter in particular, as a consequence of their considerable scope and corresponding cost --

RV2

/vi cont./

114 have become known almost solely in strictly scientific circles,
121 and thus my publication may fill a substantial gap in the popular-scientific travel literature, in that it substantially supplements Czekanowsky's brief reports already published earlier in the Russian language in the publications of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society and, in part, also in the German language in the "Russischen Revue."

128 The scientific appendices will be acceptable to both the expert and the educated laity. They contain observations which refer to a broader area and, as a consequence of this, could only with difficulty be incorporated in the actual travel account, without unduly breaking the thread of the story.

St. Petersburg, in May, 1882.

F. Müller.

RV2

/1/

Introduction

114 Toward the end of the year 1872, chiefly at the suggestion
[101] of the academician Friedrich Schmidt, the Imperial Russian Geographical Society in St. Petersburg decided to send out an expedition to explore the practically completely unknown Lower (nishnaja /nizhnyaya/) Tungúska and Olenék rivers, principally with reference to geology, and chose the geologist Alexander Czekanówsky of Irkutsk, well known through his excellent investigations of the geological conditions of the Irkutsk government and the Baikal Mountains over many years, to carry out this plan. Besides a young man experienced as a collector and preparator, Mr. Ksenshopólsky, a capable topographer from Irkutsk, Mr.
[101] Nachwálnych, was to accompany the expedition. Before the departure of the expedition in March of 1873, Czekanówsky, with whom I had frequently undertaken shorter trips, particularly to Lake Kossogól, suggested to me that I, at that time an instructor of mathematics and physics in the government Gymnasium in Irkutsk, also go along on this trip to check the topographical data by means of astronomical observations and to make magnetic observations, which here, /2/ relatively near the Siberian maximum of magnetic intensity, were bound to be of great scientific interest.

[122] Through the good offices of the Geographical Society, I was granted permission by his Excellency the Minister for the Enlightenment of the Masses to take part in this expedition and was also given the necessary funds, and therefore by the middle of May I was able to follow the other gentlemen, whom I joined in the upper part of the Lower Tungúska in the village of Népa. During the first days of September (here, as elsewhere, also in reporting meteorological data, the old style) we reached the Jenisseí /Yenisei/ not far from Turuchansk /Turukhansk/ with rich yields, and, after a prolonged stay in the city of Jenisseísk /Yeniseisk/, we arrived in Irkutsk again at the beginning of November. After I gave up my service connection here at the Gymnasium, we set out from Irkutsk as early as December, this time only Czekanówsky and myself, to carry out the second part of our expedition, the exploration of the Olenék, and we did not return until January, 1875.

121 The following pages contain a description of this latter journey,
[114] popularized for the general public. Included are reminiscences of the Tungúska journey and some of the findings of Czekanówsky,

Y /2 cont./

121 who, in the year 1875, again visited the lower part of the Olenék
● [114] and the Lena to complete his observations, while at the same time I took part in the surveying of Siberia, likewise started by the Geographical Society.

Y
[126] Since East Siberia, and especially the part under consideration here, is apt to be a complete terra incognita to the foreign reader to an even greater extent than to the Russian, I shall /3/ also add here for better orientation a brief survey of the history, rather uneventful in itself, of this northernmost region of Russia, with reference to the general map of the territory between the Jenisseí and Jana /Yana/ appended to this volume, which, drawn up according to our data, was reproduced by the Imperial Russian General Staff.

Y
175 The stretches of land of interest to us were discovered by Rus-
648 sian Cossacks in the first half of the seventeenth century. The
167 city of Mangaséja /Mangazeya/ was founded on the river Tas /Taz/ in Samojeden /Samoyed/ country about the year 1600
[361] under the rule of Czar Boris Fedorovich Godunov. From here the Cossacks soon penetrated to the Jenisseí, founded there in the year 1607 near the mouth of the Turuchán /Turukhan/ River a settlement named after it, to which the entire trade of Mangaséja was later directed, and soon afterwards also discovered the mouths of the Jenisseí and the Pjássida River lying to the east. Spurred on by ambition and also not forgetting their pockets, Cossacks in the following years gradually pushed up the (Lower) Tungúska, emptying into the Jenisseí near Turuchánsk, before them, as Fischer (1) relates, the hunters ("are rovers who band together in

Y
[113] 1. Johann Eberhard Fischer, Sibirische Geschichte /Siberian History/, St. Petersburg, 1768. 2 vols. The following very characteristic quotations are taken from this work.

order to catch game"). The Lena was reached probably as early as 1620 (even earlier by the hunters) by crossing the watershed, barely 30 versts wide here, from the present village of Podwolótschnaja /Podvoloshnaya/ on the Tunguska and therefore emerging about 50 versts below the present Kirensk.

T
648 This was not accomplished without battle with the resident
721 tribes. Fischer tells about a band /4/ of 189 hunters: "Never-
175 theless they were occasionally sharply rapped on the knuckles

/6 cont./He did not return to
648 Jakutsk until the year 1642. Also along the Jana, while Busa
175 lived on the lower part, the upper part was conquered by the Jakutsk Cossacks, who traveled there on horseback across the mountains from the Aldan.

So much for the oldest authenticated history of these northern regions. Russian dominance became stronger and stronger, especially after /7/ the constant strife between the various Cossack parties was brought to an end as a result of the appointment in Jakutsk of an independent wojewoden /voivode/ in the year 1641.

175 I have only a few more words to add about the scientific
● 114 conquest of the region in question. It began first with Peter the Great, although there were earlier maps of Siberia and routes of march prepared by Rémesow /Remezov/, whose atlas still exists in manuscript, but no longer meets current demands. Peter the Great sent geodesists to Siberia and took care of their training. Especially important for us is the expedition of Messerschmidt, who was originally called upon by Peter for the first founding of an academy of the sciences and in 1719 was sent to Siberia, where, on numerous journeys up to 1727, he collected valuable material for the natural sciences, as well as undertaking a great many latitudinal measurements. On the Lower Tunguska Messerschmidt was our first and only predecessor; he went up the river from the Troitzky Monastery to Podwolotschnaja /Podvoloshnaya/.

Forever memorable are the expeditions under the leadership of Bering, carried out with the utmost endurance for ten years, from 1733-1743, during the reign of the Empress Anna Ivanovna, which finally resulted in the complete survey of the north and part of the east coast of Siberia. Prónтschischtschew /Prontschischev/ and Charitón Láptew /Laptev/ in particular worked from the Lena toward the west; the former and his wife succumbed to the hardships at the mouth of the Olenek. Of the scientists accompanying this great expedition, the naturalist Gmelin, Sr., the historiographer Müller, and the astronomer de l'Isle /De Lisle/ de la Croyère, with whom Steller and Fischer were later associated, none came into the territory explored by us. For this, /8/ besides the aforementioned Messerschmidt, we had as predecessor only the present Bishop of Jakutsk, Dionýssij, who, as the missionary Chitrów, visited the lower Olenek and published (in the publications of the Siberian Section of the

/8 cont./

175 Imperial Russian Geographical Society) a description of the
●114 regions visited by him, which is most interesting in many respects.

On the other hand, for the border areas, especially the lower Jenisseĭ, there is a whole series of interesting expeditions, of which I shall mention here only the most noteworthy: the ethnographer Castrén, the geologists Fr. Schmidt and Lopatin, and, in quite recent times, Nordenskiöld and his party have brought back to us rich scientific material from these remote regions. Next to Pallas, however, who personally saw only the southern parts, Siberian science is most deeply indebted to A. v. Middendorff, the famous explorer of the Taimyr country, who, of all the land travelers, advanced farthest on the continent of Asia, almost to 76° latitude.

In the eastern part of our territory, there are principally to be mentioned the expeditions of Anjou and Baron Wrangel in the years 1821-1823, the former of whom in particular also determined more accurately astronomically the mouths of the Lena and the Olenek, as well as, in the south, the 1828 and 1829 expeditions of Hansteen and his companion Due, who continued his explorations to Wiljuisk /Vilyuisk/, and Erman's, who traveled by way of Jakutsk /Yakutsk/ to the Pacific Ocean, and finally the expedition of Maack and his fellow travelers in the Wiljui /Vilyui/ region, outfitted by the Siberian Section of the Imperial Geographical Society in 1854, the results of which are but little known up to now. (A volume containing meteorological /9/ material appeared in the Russian language in 1877 in Irkutsk.)

114 There still remains for me the sad duty of dedicating a few lines to the memory of my faithful traveling companion -- Alexander Czekanowsky. He was not permitted to work over even a part of the rich geological material brought back by him, not permitted to carry out his favorite plan and to open up the territory of the Anábara /Anabar/ and the Dshésse, still completely unknown scientifically. Still in the strongest years of manhood at the age of 45, he ended his life, most unselfishly dedicated to science, on October 18/30, 1876, in a fit of melancholy, the gradual development of which had often caused me serious concern on our joint travels. Involved in the Polish uprising of the sixties, Czekanowsky had come to Siberia involuntarily, and here, in spite of long years of the most oppressive

/9 cont./

114 conditions, he busied himself incessantly with geology, with which he had fallen in love at the universities of Kiev and Dorpat, most eagerly observing and collecting. His keen observations and his invaluable collections earned him the sympathies of the Petersburg scholars; he secured the means for more and more extensive exploratory journeys and finally, after their termination, returned to Europe in the spring of 1876. Afterwards, in recognition of his great scientific accomplishments, he was completely pardoned by His Majesty the Emperor, and he was even permitted unhampered residence at court -- an exception from his fellow sufferers. His life seemed destined to become ever happier; from all sides he was met with warm sympathy; a trip to Sweden in the course of the summer brought him in /10/ contact with foreign colleagues. Seemingly strengthened and cheered, he returned to St. Petersburg. Then suddenly that malady, the seed of which had long been present, appeared with terrible force, and before his many friends could have an inkling of it the catastrophe followed. Peace to his ashes! Honor to his memory!

/11/ First Chapter

100 Departure from Irkutsk. -- Travel papers. -- Trade on the Lena. -- High grain prices. -- Planned navigation on the Tunguska. -- Mild winter. -- Arrangement of the post stations. -- Kirensk. -- Bánschtschikowa. -- The Dmítrjew brothers. -- Arrival in the village of Podwolótschnaja on the Lower Tunguska. -- The villages of Népa and Preobrashénskoje. -- Unscrupulous trader. -- Agriculture. -- Stay in Móga and Jerbochotschón. -- Weather. -- Scarcity of birds. -- Preparations for the journey.

122 On December 29 (old style), 1873, all the preparations for the journey were finally completed. Since the evening before, two large, mat-covered pack-sleds (koschewá), loaded with the principal part of our baggage, had stood ready in the yard; the third sled, intended for Czekanowsky, me, and some hand luggage, was to be procured from the post and changed at each

/130 cont./

122 provided almost our only food, in view of the lack of reindeer
123 meat. In laying out the nets, Boldonó used his own boat,
which held our attention because it was made out of poplar
114 wood. That is, in Middendorff (1) /131/ there is a note that
174

137 1. Sibirische Reise /Siberian Journey/,
501 Vol. IV, Part 1, No. 4, p. 572.
171

131] along the streams flowing into the Arctic Ocean west of the Olenék there are poplar boats, the material for which comes from the alluvial islands of the Olenék. Now, however, along the Olenék we had come across neither the aromatic poplar (Populus suaveolens Fisch.), which barely reaches the Tunguska (along it only one specimen was known to the population in the vicinity of Podwolótschnaja /Podvoloshnaya/ as a great rarity and this fell as an offering to science in 1873), nor the aspen (Populus tremula L.), which likewise has its arctic boundary much more to the south. To be sure, we heard that the first-named poplar occurs on some tributaries of the Olenék, indeed, even very far to the north, namely on the little Tyrachtán River, which empties into the Nákukyt River, therefore probably about 70° latitude, but it is said to be very rare everywhere and of so little thickness that it cannot be used for any kind of work. Therefore where did those poplar boats come from? Boldonó's boat came from the Lena, brought from there by his father. If Middendorff's statement does not simply rest on an error, he perhaps means the islands at the mouth of the Olenék, where possibly poplar trunks from the more easterly Siberian rivers, but not from the Olenék, might have been deposited by the sea.

122 On August 17 we saw a young reindeer on the bank and
123 soon afterward a human dwelling. A stop was made, and while I quickly made my magnetic observations, for which I now rarely found time, Boldonó went across the river and after some time appeared in the company of an oldish Jakuten /Yakut/. We had hoped to acquire in him a talkative successor to our all too silent guide, but in vain. Even less could be gotten out of

/139 cont./

122 six of them with four shots. The animals flew up after each
[136] shot and came down again a few steps away, without taking
[223] any notice of the approaching hunters. This fearlessness of the animals, which is in direct contrast to the timidity of the human beings, is probably to be explained by the fact that the Jakuten /Yakut/ /140/ do not regard it as worth the trouble to squander precious powder on bird game.

Our longing for some change of scenery was finally satisfied on August 29, in that the river, over half a verst wide, made two bends, which in a few hours of travel twice brought
[114] us around almost three-quarters of the wind rose. The topographer who had accompanied us the previous year would have been greatly enchanted by these topographical beauties (he feared that his colleagues in Irkutsk would scarcely believe that the Tunguska made such great bends), but we were certainly not, for the attainment of our journey's end was seriously endangered by these caprices of nature.

/141/ Seventh Chapter

100 The Jakuten /Yakut/ become more amiable. -- The iron Jegór and his statements. -- Bad weather. -- Northern vegetation. -- Falcon hunt. -- Unreliability of the Jakut statements. -- Beyond the 70th degree of latitude. -- Onset of winter. -- Icebound. -- Concerning the winter quarters. -- Message to Bulún. -- Internal affairs of our household. -- The fauna of the Siberian north. -- Freezing of the river. -- The local reindeer. -- Further travel on foot. -- Help in need. -- The Chatýgin family. -- Sachár O'ssipowitsch Rjeschétnikow. -- A Jakut balagan.

122 On August 30, not far from the little river of Ssukána, we
123 again came in sight of a human habitation and, to be sure, one still inhabited now, as we could see by the reindeer grazing in the vicinity -- we passed old. dilapidated huts several times a day. The call of our Tungus was soon answered. First a man and then a woman came down to the

/176 cont./

entering the balagan we were received by the ladies of the house. They had, of course, put on their most beautiful finery; we were struck in particular by the very large silver earrings, which, by the way, are also fashionable among the wealthy Tungus women along the Tunguska and are also acquired there from the Jakuten /Yakut/. After the strenuous tundra trip we made ourselves comfortable at the roaring fire of the fireplace, heartily glad that from here we could, with a good conscience, turn back toward the south, toward home. We had hoped to be here two months earlier -- the reader has learned with what /177/ great difficulties we had made it possible to be here now. /The remainder of p. 177, pp. 178-180, and the first paragraph of p. 181 are omitted in the translation; see the foreign text. Page 181 continues as follows./

Of the living scientists only one had come farther than we on the mainland of Asia -- indeed, by almost three degrees of latitude -- Middendorff at the mouth of the Taimyr. We also did not forget the dead -- the intrepid mariners, Charitón Láptew /Laptev/, Prόntschischtschew /Prontschischev/, Tscheljúskin /Chelyuskin/, and others who had trod this ground almost a century and a half before us undertook from here their daring journeys to explore the coasts of the Arctic Ocean and for the most part also paid here for their zeal with their lives. All our searchings for their graves, for remains of their dwellings, were in vain. On the rocks which Czekanowsky climbed there were in several places remains of old dwelling sites -- whether of theirs remained doubtful. Every tradition of that noble expedition paid for with such tremendous sacrifices /182/has been lost among the inhabitants (1). At that time Russian peasants probably lived

1. So it in fact appeared to us, but in the following year Czekanowsky found the inhabitants of Boljkalák much more communicative. They showed him the graves of Prόntschischtschew and his courageous wife, who had followed him into this desolate place. On the last rock on the right shore of the

/182 cont./

114 Olenék, near the mouth, he found the sunken graves overgrown with moss and lichens; only a weathered wooden cross with a barely legible inscription recalls the hero to mind. Perhaps an age that has again turned its interest to a significant degree to the navigation of the Arctic Ocean will set up a worthy monument for this deserving champion at the place where he ended his heroic career.

175 At that time Russian peasants probably lived
178 here; perhaps the present inhabitants are in part descendants
[651] of the many crews that came here with those bold commanders; they still call themselves krestjáne, i.e., peasants, and their crown tax seems to be standardized accordingly, differing from that of the other Jakuten /Yakut/; in everything else they are completely Jakutized and any reminder of former times has
[829] disappeared. But they complain that they are becoming ever
[162] fewer, not, say, because of especially devastating sicknesses, but because only daughters are preponderantly born to them. I do not know whether this phenomenon also occurs among other ichthyophagists. But that is what they are in the truest sense of the word.

226 During the greater part of the year they feed themselves and
262 their dogs almost exclusively on fish. Mukssún and o'mul of
231 considerable size are the principal fish, also taiméne /taimen/ and néljma, for which, however, this was not the proper season, and therefore, instead of the anticipated delicacy, we had
226 to be content with the former, less prized fish. Otherwise only a few smaller kinds of fish are found here, but no sturgeon or sterlet, although these, as we /183/ learned on the journey, are caught, even though rarely, much farther upstream in the region of the Ssiligír. Fishing is also productive in the tundra lakes; in particular two kinds present there were brought to us, the ihúk and the mungnúr, the latter a very tasty fish that is also quit. common in the Olenék itself, where from the Ssiligír

/245 cont./

122 fact that we had not received any assistance from him during our journey was due to the vagueness in the official papers sent to him by the Geographical Society. He had thought that we would explore only the upper course of the Olenék and then would return via Wiljuisk /Vilyuisk/ and had therefore sent the ispráwnik /ispravnik/ there the strictest orders. The latter, however, probably as lacking in energy as the one in Werchójansk /Verkhoyansk/, perhaps for the same reason, had answered all inquiries by saying that despite the most diligent investigations he had not heard anything at all about our expedition and therefore could not send any guides or other assistance to it, we had probably left his district entirely and gone into the neighboring district of Turuchansk /Turukhansk/. This was reported to the governor general in Irkutsk, and there, as well as in Europe, there was great anxiety about us, for only a major mishap would have caused us to change our itinerary. In any case the governor had also notified the isprawnik of Werchojansk, but, especially after the onset of winter, no longer expected us to come from there himself. All of our correspondence that had arrived in the meantime and 1,000 rubles which the Geographical Society had sent us as supplementary aid were likewise in Wiljuisk. Of course the governor nevertheless had the money paid out to us, for we urgently needed it. Furthermore, we learned from him that the Geographical Society proposed that, after sufficient recovery, of course, we should start out from here again in the following spring to travel from the Lena across to the Jenisseí /Yenisei/, and in doing so explore in particular the completely unknown basins of the Anábara and Lake Dshésse. /246/ We had to decline the offer, for, quite apart from the state of our health, we had already become convinced that such an expedition could only be undertaken from the Jenisseí, because is Jakutsk /Yakutsk/ it would hardly be possible to equip it adequately, or only with a disproportionate financial outlay.

● 114
122 On the same day, at the governor's residence we also met the Acting Councillor of State, Dr. of Med. von Awgustinówitsch, who had been delegated here to investigate the health conditions in Siberia and intended to visit Werchojansk and, if I am not mistaken, Kolýmsk as well. He had already

/246 cont./

114 been in southern Siberia earlier, and in particular on the island of
122 of Sakhalin, and from there, since he was not only a medical man, but a very competent naturalist, had taken back to Europe excellent collections, chiefly botanical. I later had the pleasure of renewing his acquaintance in St. Petersburg, from where he now makes almost annual trips to Sakhalin as a doctor on a ship of the Imperial Navy that takes convicts there. The museums of the capital have obtained through Mr. von Awgustinówitsch
114 most valuable contributions from there remote regions. Further-
126 more at the hospitable table of the governor we met almost daily an officer (now lieutenant-colonel) stationed here, Nikolai Iwánowitsch Ssábo, who owned photographic equipment, with which he had taken many views of the town of Jakutsk /Yakutsk/, as well as portraits of Jakut /Yakut/ men and women in their
126 national costumes. Czekanowsky and I unfortunately could not possibly get permanent impressions of the scenery and folk types of the regions traversed by us. With all the pursuits that we were obliged to do -- astronomical, magnetic, meteorological, hypsometric observations, guiding the route of march with the /247/ compass and clock, geological surveys, making the richest possible botanical, zoological, and geological collections, managing affairs, etc. -- we could not think of taking photographs or making sketches, quite apart from the fact that photography, besides good equipment, also requires considerable practice, and we could certainly not have acquired either of these in Irkutsk in the short time left to us to prepare for the
114 expedition. The art of photography, moreover, seems to have spread only recently to the land of the Jakuten and, as I have already said, even to Werchojansk. The former governor of Jakutsk for many years and the predecessor of General Dewitte, Privy-Councillor von Stubendorff, whose memory is still held in high esteem among the inhabitants -- he was an army doctor and obtained this high post in recognition of his accurate knowledge of the country -- had no photographs to exhibit among his very large collections.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

completely unconnected with the ancient inhabitants of the Lena district and that they constituted an element which migrated there. 174

Back in the 17th–18th centuries, the view was expressed in literature (by Isbrand Ides, Stralenberg, Miller, Gmelin, Fischer and others) that the Yakuts were a people who had come from the south, specifically from the Baykal region. This view, which was later developed and substantiated (particularly at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries) by ethnographers, became the traditional theory of the "southern origin of the Yakuts," a theory which even today is predominant. [114]

This theory is based, first, on the existence among the Yakuts themselves of legends relating that their ancestors once lived in the Baykal region and were driven away by the Buryats, and, second, on the undoubted evidence of cultural ties between the Yakuts and the nomadic steppe to the south; this evidence is, first and foremost, the Turkic origin of the Yakut language, and the pastoral economy of the Yakuts, together with a number of related elements of material culture (leather utensils, the preparation of kumys, butter, riding and pack saddles and so on), certain aspects of dress, and so on. All these phenomena of the language and culture of the Yakuts single them out clearly from the surrounding taiga peoples and bring them closer to the distant Turkic-speaking (to some extent Mongolic-speaking) population of southern Siberia and Central Asia. On the basis of these facts, the traditional theory considers the Yakuts to be an immigrant people who once lived in the Baykal region (according to some investigators they lived still earlier on the Upper Yenisey, in the Uryankhay district and even in Turkestan). It was later—in the 13th and 14th centuries, according to the prevalent opinion, though asserted by some to be much earlier—that the Yakuts were driven from there to the north, and to the Middle Lena, where they settled down, displacing the earlier settlers, the Tungus, from those parts. The Tungus, incidentally, were partly assimilated by the Yakuts, who borrowed certain elements of taiga culture from them (hunting, etc.).

This conception of the origin of the Yakuts undoubtedly contains a grain of truth, since it is based on obvious facts; but it is clearly one-sided and oversimplifies the problem. The advocates of this theory underrate the complexity and originality of Yakut culture; in explaining the origin of some aspects of it which indeed link it with the nomadic steppes, this theory at the same time ignores other, equally important and abundant cultural evidence linking the Yakuts with their neighbors, the hunting peoples of the taiga. On the other hand, the actual penetration of pastoral-nomadic cultural elements into the Middle Lena (which is an undisputed historical fact) cannot be depicted, as used to be the case, in the form of the extremely unlikely simultaneous mass migration of an entire people 2500 miles through dense, practically uninhabited taiga into unfamiliar lands of the north.

Contemporary Soviet scholars (Okladnikov and Tokarev) do not deny the presence of southern elements in the makeup of the Yakut population and culture, but they attempt to find another explanation for them. First of all, it was only recently that due attention was given to the complexity and heterogeneity of Yakut culture. Anthropological data (those of M. G. Levin) show that there are at least two racial components in the Yakut population, one of which (the predominant one) is very close in type to the western Buryat, while the other is most likely related to the ancient population of the Siberian taiga. Ethnographic data show the existence of certain autochthonous taiga hunting elements in the Yakut culture, alongside the southern, pastoral elements. With regard to the Yakut language, 174 114

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

most of the vocabulary and the grammatical structure are undoubtedly Turkic in origin. At the same time, the language contains a considerable number of loan words from the Mongol and Tungus languages. Academician V. V. Radlov (1908) put forward the hypothesis that the vocabulary, phonetic structure, and even the grammatical structure of the Yakut language has a pre-Turkic, more ancient stratum of partly Mongol and partly indeterminate origin.

The latest research, admittedly, has not confirmed this hypothesis; hence the problem of non-Turkic elements in the Yakut language requires further study. Analysis of the names of the Yakut tribal-clan groups (known from 17th-century documents and also from later data) confirms that the Yakut population is further made up of immigrant groups from the south. To judge by the names, these include the present-day Batulins, Khorins, Tumats, Ergits, and some other clans and nasleg[1]. It may be considered that pastoral groups, taking their nomadic culture with them, gradually infiltrated the Middle Lena Basin from the south, from the Baykal regions. One of the principal groups of these migrants from the south was evidently the Kurykans—a Turkic people inhabiting the western Baykal region in the 9th and 10th centuries. Since some of the Kurykans clearly contributed to the composition of the western Buryats later on, this explains many features of similarity in the culture of the western Buryats and Yakuts and the wide distribution of the same anthropological type among both of them.

The trek northwards was gradual and took a long time. In the Amga-Lena watershed, under conditions favorable for pastoralism, these newly arrived groups settled down, establishing contact with the local hunting-fishing population. In the process of economic and cultural contact, there was gradual absorption of the local population by the newcomers. A higher, pastoral type of economy and southern elements of culture, as well as the Turkic language, became predominant.

Such is the ethnogenesis of the Yakuts in the light of present-day knowledge.

Precise historical accounts of the Yakuts only date from the time of their first contact with the Russians, that is to say, 1620, and annexation to the Russian State. At that time the Yakuts were not a single political unit, but were divided into a number of independent tribes. Tribal relations were already decomposing, however, and there was a fairly clearly marked class stratification. The tsarist voyevods and soldiery took advantage of the intertribal strife to break the resistance of some of the Yakut population; they also took advantage of the class differences within it by pursuing a policy of systematic support of the ruling aristocratic clique, the princelings (toyons), whom they turned into their own agents for purposes of governing the Yakut district. From that moment on, the class differences among the Yakuts began to become more clearly marked.

The Yakut masses led a hard life. They paid tribute in sable and fox furs, had to perform a number of other compulsory services and were exploited by the tsarist soldiery, Russian merchants and their own toyons. After several unsuccesful uprisings (1634, 1636–1637, 1639–1640, and 1642), and after the toyons had gone over to the side of the voyevods, the Yakut masses could only retaliate against the oppression by sporadic attempts at resistance and flight from their native ulusy to outlying

[1] A territorial and population unit; originally, the members of a single camp, now equivalent to the rayon.—Ed.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

(up to the beginning of the 20th century), is a humped iron scythe with a short, curved handle with which the grass was rather hewn (left and right) than mown. Later on this scythe was replaced by the Russian Lithuanian-type scythe and is never used nowadays. The Yakuts mowed the grass in the alasy and river valleys, gathering the hay into small sheaves, in which it often became soaked and rotted away, hence the quality of the hay was not usually very high.

In the winter, the cattle were kept in cold, dark and crowded khotons, which were usually built under the same roof as the dwelling; the animals were usually herded into the khoton only at night, while in the daytime they were left outside, in the frost. When there was a lack of hay, the cattle had little to eat, and were watered with icy water from a hole in the ice. The austere conditions under which the cattle were kept and the cold climate made them hardy, but unproductive. The Yakut cow yielded an average of 60 buckets of milk a year, and for two or three months in the winter was left unmilked. The mares were only milked in the summer, as a general rule.

Both the cattle and the horses were utilized in much the same way; they gave milk, meat, and hides, and served for transportation (oxen were usually harnessed to carts, while horses were ridden, or carried packs).

The predominance of pastoralism involved preservation of the semi-nomadic way of life. Until recently the Yakuts retained the custom of moving twice a year—round about May and October—from the winter to the summer camps, and back again. The winter dwellings were usually set up near the mowings, while the summer dwellings (which, incidentally, were comparatively close by the former) were built close to the pasture-lands.

Fishing, Hunting and Agriculture

The second branch of economy in importance was fishing. There was a tremendous amount of carp and a small fish called mundu in the abundant lakes, and coregonus muksun, white salmon and so on were plentiful in the rivers. For the poor people who had no cattle, fishing had long been a main occupation; the expression balyksyt (fisherman) is used in documents of the 17th century in the sense of "a poor man." At the same time, there were actually complete tribal groups who seem to have lived chiefly by fishing. These were the so-called "foot clans" of the Yakuts (Osekui, Ontuls, Kokui, Kiriks, Kyrgydays and Orgots). These tribes, who were clearly a remnant of the very ancient prepastoral population, were first discovered in the 17th century by Russians on the Vilyuy. For the Yakut pastoralists, fishing was an essential subsidiary occupation and has retained its importance until our own day.

The fish were caught chiefly in the summer, but there was also fishing through the ice during the wintertime. Use was made of seines which were chiefly made of horsehair, smaller nets, and sack-nets, etc. In the autumn there was usually collective fishing with a large seine, and the catch was divided among all those taking part, in accordance with ancient custom.

There is a hypothesis (V. L. Seroshevskiy) that Yakut fishing was only recently borrowed from the Evenks and Russians. In actual fact, fishing is the oldest form of economy among the population of the Lena region, including the ancestors of the Yakuts.

Hunting is the third, though far less important, branch of Yakut economy. Just like fishing, it goes back to very ancient times. During the

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

developed class relationships and certain very archaic survivals of ancient times. By the time the Russians arrived in the first half of the 17th century, the Yakuts had divided up into independent tribes. The largest and strongest of these were the Kangalastsy and Namy on the left bank of the Lena, and the Megins, Borogons, Betuns and Baturustsy between the Lena and the Amga; these very large tribes (to judge by the Russian tribute registers) numbered from 2000 to 5000 persons each. The smaller tribal groupings, some of which were independent and some of which belonged to those mentioned above, were reckoned in dozens. In the Russian sources these tribes are called "volosts," but the Yakut name for them was evidently d'on or aymakh. These tribes often warred with one another, and sometimes banded together temporarily for joint operations. All members of one tribe were considered fellow clansmen, which, among other things, was indicated by the fact that the "volosts" were exogamic groups. In turn, the tribes divided into smaller clan groups. The bond between fellow clansmen showed up in the custom of mutual assistance and vendetta, which, incidentally, was often replaced by blood money.

At this period, however, the clan-tribal structure was already in a state of decomposition. The tribes and clans were headed by the military aristocracy—the toyons. These possessed large herds of cattle and employed the labor of slaves and dependent fellow clansmen on their farms; they were also the military leaders. Heading detachments of armed servants and junior fellow clansmen, the toyons raided each other's territory, and frequently looted the farms of the free members of the community, seizing their cattle and destroying their economic independence. These toyon wars and raids were one of the factors which speeded up the decomposition of the clan commune. The ruined members of the commune were reduced to the status of "balyksyts" (poor people without cattle, or fishermen), or else became the indentured slaves of the toyons. Most of the slaves (kuluts or bokans) originated in this way.

The system of slavery among the Yakuts was fairly peculiar in form, containing certain patriarchal elements. The number of slaves was small; even the richer toyons had no more than 15 or 20, and much more frequently there were one to three slaves for each master. The slave usually had his own family and often lived in a separate yurt. Slavery was hereditary. Some of the slaves—the adult males—were part of the armed band of the toyon. On the other hand, cases were known in which the slaves led a hard life and their masters treated them cruelly, and we also know of the manifestation, although embryonic, of class feeling against exploitation (flight by groups of slaves and so on).

The problem of whether or not there was feudalism among the Yakuts before the Russians arrived still remains unsolved in Soviet historical-ethnographic literature.

Some writers (S. V. Bakhrushin and O. V. Ionova) think that early feudal relations among the Yakuts began to form in the pre-Russian period; they consider the presence of groups of semidependent people "living close to" the toyons, as well as the custom of lending cattle for grazing (the later khahaas), to be signs of this. Tokarev considers that a feudal-type relationship only began to form among the Yakuts after they had been annexed to Russia.

As regards land ownership, the older communal-clan system was still in force just before the Russians arrived. The communal form of land use not only predominated in forest hunting grounds and pastures, but the fisheries and even the meadows were still by and large in common use. Nevertheless, the meadows and fisheries had already been taken over to

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

Furthermore, the toyons frequently enjoyed the right of possessing larger plots, sometimes through inheritance, cleared from the forest or formed at the site of a drained lake. The leasing of land was also common.

In the second half of the 19th century the custom of equalizing of the land each year in accordance with the yield of grass came into use. The harvest was evaluated by elected "deputies," and those whose harvest was poorer than it should have been in view of the plot had the right to an extra quota of hay, and vice versa. This was called bebierke (from the Russian word poverka [adjustment]). But in actual fact this custom did not reduce inequality, for the "deputies" always acted in favor of the more influential (toyon) section of the population, to which they themselves very often belonged.

Generally speaking, the toyons possessed a large proportion of the available land, and the best part, to boot. For example, in 1908 two-thirds of all the land in the First Ospetskiy Nasleg in the Dyupsyunskiy Ulus belonged to five toyon households. In the Suntarskiy Ulus the toyons, who made up only 7% of the total population, possessed approximately half the land. By 1917, 55% of all the usable land was possessed by the rich people. By owning land and livestock the toyons were in a position to exploit the needy masses of the population. The forms that the exploitation took were greatly varied; they included elements characteristic of capitalist relations and the older patriarchal-feudal forms, as well as hidden survivals of slavery. For example, it was the practice to hire laborers—khamnachyts—usually for a definite period, particularly for haymaking; they were hired to carry firewood, build yurts and so on. They were paid either in money or in kind; and the method used was usually the typical Yakut system of payment (remuneration in advance), which was called "to take a contract" from the toyon for this or that work. This system of contracting was very advantageous to the richer people, since they then had complete power over the laborers. In return for a paltry sum received in advance, the poor person was sometimes in the toyon's clutches for a long time to come.

The system of contracting was also applied in other cases; advances were paid by the toyons for the supply of a whole variety of products, ranging from butter and hay right down to wild duck eggs. This system was a form of extremely cruel exploitation. One observer (V. F. Troshchanskiy, an exiled member of Narodnaya Volya)[3] wrote outright that the "welfare of the population will not be improved as long as this system exists in its present form."

Another very common form of exploitation was the handing over of the milch cattle to the poor people by the toyons for their use and for feeding, the so-called system of khahaas. At an earlier stage (at the beginning of the 19th century) the livestock was taken over, usually for a year, from spring to spring, but at the end of the 19th century it was more common to take over the cattle for only the summer (the distribution of livestock for feeding during the winter—uostur—was a separate process). In return for use of the cow, the poor peasant had to pay the toyon, as was the custom, 30 pounds of melted butter and 12-15 poods of tar (frozen sour milk) in the autumn; sometimes this was replaced or supplemented by compulsory service for the benefit

[3] A revolutionary Narodnik organization.—Ed.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

the whole of their lives, and only occasionally eat their fill . . . it is a country of systematic starvation."[4] But the Yakut toiling masses were particularly badly off during the long and severe Yakutiyan winter. "The periods of hunger," wrote another observer, "when there is absolutely nothing to eat, when all the crumbs have been picked up and consumed, when the cows carrying calves are not milked, and nature, paralyzed by the cold, firmly resists all attempts to find food, are repeated every year and two-thirds of the Yakut population have to suffer for a fairly prolonged period on this account."[5]

On the other hand, individuals with fortunes of tens of thousands of rubles stood out among the wealthy Yakut hierarchy. The wealthy estates developed mainly through trade and various kinds of speculation, although the owners did not hesitate to apply the old patriarchal-feudal methods of exploitation in amassing their wealth.

Crushed by the omnipotence of the toyons, the masses of poor people in the ulus hardly dared to protest or fight for their rights. It was only now and then that the toyon oppression gave rise to outbursts of protest, but these were sporadic and promptly suppressed. This was the fate of the revolt of Vasiliy Manchara (1830-1850), hero of the Yakut legends.

Given the sharp class contradictions, it was extremely characteristic that certain very archaic survivals were retained in the Yakut social structure and left on it their own strange imprint. Some of these survivals were nothing more than form devoid of its original content.

Right up to the Revolution the Yakuts retained their division into clans (*аймаки*). But the clans were purely administrative units legalized by the "Native Code" of 1822, although they were historically descended from the ancient clans of the clan-tribal stage.

At the head of these administrative clans stood elected elders (who were called in the old-fashioned Yakut language "princelings" (kinees, or achchygyy kinees—"small princeling"). Several clans banded into a nasleg, which was also governed by an elected elder (in actual fact often hereditary), known in the Yakut language as ulakhan kinees or "great prince," who together with the clan elders made up the "clan administration." A group of naslegs formed an ulus, at the head of which there was an elected ulus head and a "native council." The ulusy, and also some of the naslegs, and even the clans, were historically associated with the ancient Yakut tribes, whose names they continued to bear—for example, the Meginskiy, Borogonskiy, Baturusskiy, Namskiy, Western and Eastern Kangalasskiy and other ulusy, the Betyunskiy, Batulinskiy, Ospetskiy and other naslegs.

At the end of the 19th century there were in all 17 ulusy, divided into 230 naslegs and 934 clans in the Yakut district (in the four okrugs—Yakutskiy, Vilyuyskiy, Verkhoyanskiy and Kolymskiy, since in the fifth—Olekminskiy Okrug—the ulusy were replaced by volosts of the Russian type).

Only the terminology of the tribal structure was retained in this administrative system. In actual fact, the tribal administrations and native councils were only organs of power of the ruling toyon stratum

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[4] V. F. Troshchanskiy. Nabroski o yakutakh Yakutskogo okruga (Notes on the Yakuts in the Yakutskiy Okrug). Kazan', 1911, p. 17.

[5] V. L. Seroshevskiy. Yakuty (opyt etnograficheskogo issledovaniya). 1 (The Yakuts [Attempt at an Ethnographic Study]). St. Petersburg, 1896, p. 423.

53: Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

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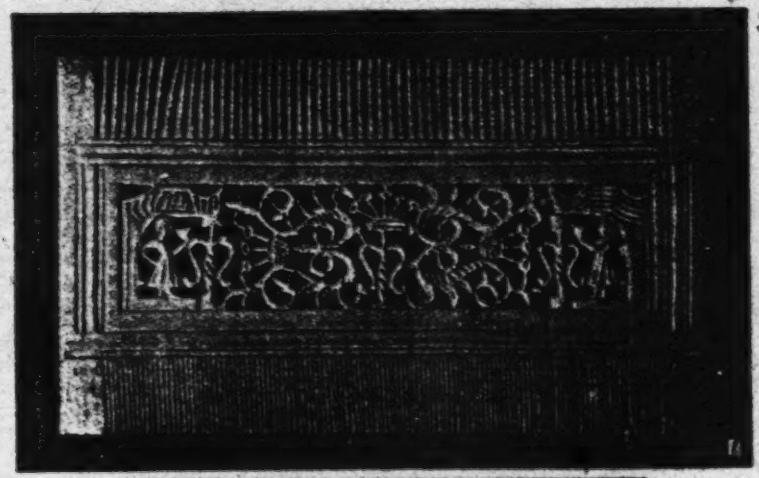

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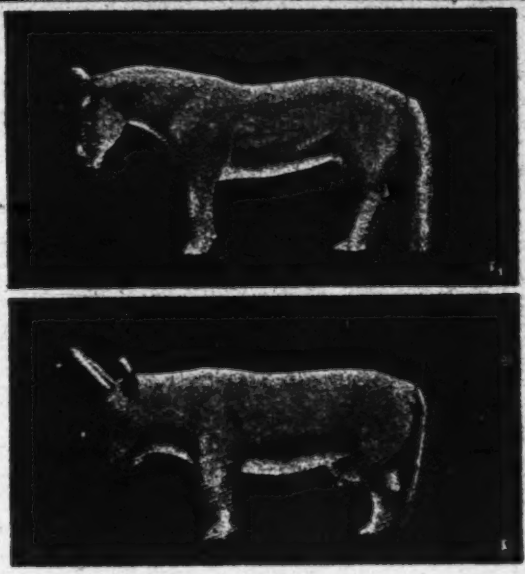

Bone carving, 19th century. 1—comb; 2—horse; 3—cow.

foundations of the Yakut written language. Uvarovskiy, a Yakut by birth, wrote down several Yakut texts in Russian characters, and on the basis of them Academician O. N. Boethling made the first scholarly analysis of the Yakut language. At the prompting of the eminent I. Ye. Veniaminov (a former missionary in the Aleutians), the priest Dmitriy Khitrov published in 1958 the first "Brief Grammar of the Yakut Language." A

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

number of (ecclesiastical) books were published in Yakut. After the 1905 revolution, artistic and journalistic literature in Yakut began to appear.

Nevertheless, education remained on a low level among the broad Yakut masses. There were no Yakut national schools. Russian church and state schools began to appear in Yakutiya in the 18th century, but there were very few of them. Even in the early 1900's, there were only 11 rural primary schools in all of Yakutiya, and 57 parish and literacy schools. The masses had little access to these schools, and still less to the secondary schools; there were only 5 of these, and they were located only in cities. Of the Yakuts, it was mainly the children of toyons who could get into them.

Nevertheless, even at the end of the 19th century, a small Yakut intelligentsia began to appear—teachers, officials, lawyers and doctors, who had chiefly received education at Tomsk University. From among this intelligentsia there emerged individual amateurs of local history and folklore—the first Yakut ethnographers and collectors. But by their class affiliation and ideology, these first Yakut intellectuals were inclined to the toyon camp, and were infected with nationalism. Alongside this bourgeois-toyon intelligentsia, there appeared in the last years preceding the October Revolution, under the influence of Social-Democratic and Bolshevist propaganda by political exiles (particularly in the circle led by Yemelyan Yaroslavskiy), a small nucleus of progressive Russian cultural workers.

Socialist Reconstruction

Formation of Yakut ASSR

In Yakutiya, just as throughout the country, the establishment of the Soviet regime involved a fierce struggle against internal and external enemies. In the autumn of 1918 power was seized in Yakutsk by the followers of Kolchak with the help of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries.[6] Hardly had the Yakutsk workers had time to overthrow the counterrevolutionary regime of Kolchak (December 15, 1919) when there flared up, particularly in the autumn of 1921, the kulak and White Guard revolts, led by tsarist officers and Yakut toyons who had been hiding in the remoter areas.

On February 16, 1922, the Presidium of the VTsIK (All-Union Central Executive Committee) adopted a resolution on the formation of the Yakut ASSR. On April 27, 1922, the Presidium, with M. I. Kalinin in the chair, reviewed this question again and decreed as follows: "To form a Yakut Autonomous Soviet Republic as a federal part of the RSFSR with its administrative center in Yakutsk."

In the autumn of 1922 the young Yakut Republic was faced with a serious threat: the American and Japanese imperialists had moved up General Pepelyayev's troops into Yakutya from Manchuria. The General received half a million rubles in gold from the American firm of Olaf Svenson and the British Hudson's Bay Company. The Americans and Japanese equipped Pepelyayev with weapons, ammunition and equipment. Food supplies and weapons were the responsibility of the Japanese

[6] The Mensheviks were a dissident wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (RSDRP), which was also the parent organization of the Communist Party. The Social Revolutionaries (SR's) were moderate agrarian socialists; they participated in the government during the first months after the October Revolution.—Ed.

233 their clothing, and sometimes even help to look after the reindeer.
464 Such a woman--the assistant of the herdsmen, receives as payment
465 for the winter's work one grown reindeer plus her food and clothing.
The herdsmen likewise receive food, winter clothing, hide for the soles of their footgear, and four or five reindeer as their pay.

233 Notwithstanding the fact that the reindeer as a riding animal plays
438 the most important role in the life of the Dolgan and is closely con-
492 nected with the activity of hunting, nevertheless the carrier's trade as a source of revenue has no significance in the economy of the Dolgan. Reindeer are usually employed for transporting the goods of mercantile organizations from Dudinka to Anabar. A 320-kilogram load is placed on one cargo sled. The pay for transporting one pood (sixteen kilograms) as far as Khatanga (one thousand kilometers) is equal to seven rubles, or 140 rubles for one sled. The trip to Khatanga with a cargo sled takes two and one-half months at a minimum. During this time the carrier loses reindeer 1) from starvation (in winter the usual picture along the main route is the skinned corpses of fallen reindeer), and 2) from wolves. When we were passing through the territory one of our contractors was obliged to leave his load on the road, without carrying it to Volosyanka, and he himself was only able to reach his home on someone else's reindeer, on account of the fact that all of his own reindeer had been scattered by the wolves. And this is by no means a rare case. In general, on the road there is very great danger of losing one's reindeer, not only to the wolves, but also in blizzards, during raids made by wild reindeer, and so forth. On the other hand, the transportation of loads for pay has an unhealthy effect on the economy of the Dolgan, for it draws the polar-fox hunters away from their basic occupation. Insufficient supervision on the part of the regional authorities has compelled the population, to their detriment, to undertake the transportation of loads, notwithstanding the very convenient combination of waterways and the possibility of transporting goods along these routes. (1)

114 1. These questions [of reindeer transportation of goods--Analyst] were touched on at one time by us in print: Sovetskaia etnografiia, 1931, No. III-IV, in the article "Poezdka k dolganam" [A Trip to the Dolgan].

178 As long as the transportation problem remains unsolved the native
439 carriers with their reindeer will do great harm to the population; on

Y 484 /38 cont./ whom he traveled for a time, had even swum down the Bureja
T 439 26 years earlier to 60 versts above its mouth, where he came
upon a Chinese guard (2). Just as the Yakut follow the Russian

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2. Reise, etc., Vol. IV, p. 166, note 1. On the other hand, the report of the escape of 6,000 Yakut over the Russian border into the Amur region, first made known and elaborated by Billings, and later repeated by many others (Sauer, Capt. Jos. Billings' Geogr.-astronom. Reise nach den nördl. Gegend. Russlands zur Unters. der Münd. des Kowima-Flusses /Capt. Jos. Billings' Geographical-Astronomical Expedition to the Northern Regions of Russia to Investigate the Mouth of the Kowima River/, etc., transl. from the English, Berlin, 1802, pp. 367, 368), originated, according to Middendorff, simply because of confusion (Sauer had heard this story in the house of the ispravnik, Hornofskij, from the assessors, Ewers and Kyschkin), and such a mass crossing of the Yakut into Chinese territory never took place (see his Reise, etc., Vol. IV, p. 169). I must agree completely, for such a number of immigrants from such a vigorous, tough, and enterprising people as the Yakut would have attracted attention in the Amur region in any case, whereas in reality aside from the isolated traders, there were no traces of any Yakut there.

T 439 Tungus, so, on the other hand, do the Daur follow the Chinese Birar and Manegir. With the same interest in trade as the former,